

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

CONDUCTED BY R. CHAMBERS (SECUNDUS)

No. 22.—VOL. I.

SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1884.

PRICE 1½d.

OUR DETECTIVE POLICE.

THE number of murders that have taken place, and the very few murderers that have been brought to justice in and about London during the last few months, must go far towards contradicting the assertion to the effect that the metropolis of England is 'the safest city in the world' to live in. And if to the list of crimes against life which have not been, and never are likely to be, brought home to the perpetrators, we add the innumerable thefts, burglaries, and other offences against property which go unpunished because the criminals are never found out, it can hardly be denied that we require a new departure in the system of our Detective Police, for the simple reason that, as at present constituted, the practical results of the same are very much the reverse of satisfactory.

It has been my lot, for reasons which need not be entered into here, to see not a little of the French detective system, and of the plans adopted by those employed in discovering crime in Paris. The two systems, those of the London and Parisian detective, differ most essentially. With us, it is as if the general commanding an army in the field was to send spies into the enemy's camp, taking care they were dressed and behaved themselves in such a manner that every one would know who they were. On the other hand, the French system of detection is based on the principle that the enemy—namely, the criminals amongst whom they have to make their inquiries—should never be able to discover who the spies are. Now, with some fifty or sixty detectives trained to perfection in the art of disguising themselves, must it not be far more easy to discover the whereabouts of crime and the identity of the criminals, than can possibly be done under our system? Our detectives are as well known to a Londoner of any experience, and we may presume they are also just as well known to the criminal classes, as if they wore uniform. Nay, in a very useful volume called *The Police Code and Manual of the Criminal Law*, compiled by Mr Howard

Vincent, it is clearly laid down that 'the idea that a detective to be useful in a district must be unknown is erroneous in the great mass of cases, as he is then unable to distinguish between honest men who would help a known officer and others.'

It seems to me, as it must do to all who study the question, that this is the fundamental mistake we make, and that it is for this reason our detection of crime is so defective. We have no spies in the enemy's camp. Our detective officers are merely policemen in shooting-jackets and billycock hats. The great criminal army knows who they are as well as if they wore their blue tunics. A French detective has nothing whatever to do with arresting criminals. He is not the sportsman who shoots the bird, but only the dog which points out where the game is to be found. The French agents of police, or detectives—many of whom have been over in England on business, and are well acquainted with our system—say that our regular police who keep order in the streets are the best guardians of peace and order in the world, but that our detective system is the worst and, practically, the most useless in Europe. Nor can any one acquainted with the subject say they are wrong. Even the most casual readers of the papers must be struck with two facts relating to crime in London. In the first place, the vigilance of the ordinary police is so great, that, as a rule, they lay hands upon a very great number of criminals, and cause a vast deal of crime to be punished. But, on the other hand, if a murderer, burglar, or other offender against society *does* manage to get clean away, he is rarely if ever caught. The police—that is, of course, the detective police—invariably 'get a clue' to the affair; and there the matter seems to end. The detection of crime is evidently not an art that has been cultivated in England.

The French detective is a man who would never be thought, by any one who did not know him personally, to be connected with the police. In fact, he generally does his best to hide his real occupation from even his most intimate

friends. Like our Londoner who is 'something in the City,' he assumes the indefinite appellation of *un employé du gouvernement*; but in what office he is 'employed,' or what his 'employment' may be, he refrains from stating. He is generally a quiet, unpretending individual, who neither courts nor avoids notice. The facility with which he assumes all kinds of disguise, and the admirable manner in which he acts the part he assumes, must be seen in order to be realised. As a rule, he takes some time before bringing his inquiries to a close; but he is rarely at fault in the long-run, and generally manages to bring down the game he is hunting.

Our English detective is the exact contrary of his French *confrère*. He does not wear uniform, but he might just as well do so, for his appearance and dress proclaim him to be what he is quite as plainly as if he was clad like X142 of the force. He is a well-meaning, intelligent fellow; but both his want of training and the system under which he has to work quite unfit him for the detection of any crime which is hidden in mystery. I remember, some years ago, being on a visit at a country-house, where the jewel-case of a lady visitor was stolen. It was quite safe when the owner had finished dressing for dinner; but a couple of hours later her maid missed it, and gave the alarm. Search was made—it is needless to say, in vain. The house was full of visitors, many of whom had brought with them their own valets and ladies' maids, besides which there was a large staff of servants belonging to the house itself. A telegram was despatched to Scotland Yard the next morning; and in due time two detective officers arrived from London. They examined the room from which the jewel-box had been taken; questioned, and, as a natural consequence, set by the ears, all the servants of the house, as well as those of the different visitors; made inquiries at the neighbouring railway station about the travellers who had left the place during the last few days; and finally, took their departure, leaving matters exactly where they were—where they have remained to the present day, and where they are likely to remain for all time.

As a comparison with the foregoing, I may mention a case of a very similar kind which I once witnessed in Paris. A friend of mine, living with his wife, daughter, and a male and female servant *au second* of a large old-fashioned house, found one morning that all his plate had been stolen. It was quite safe when the family went to bed the previous night; but in the morning it had vanished. He communicated with the police; and an elderly gentleman, who looked like the manager or one of the head-clerks of a bank, was sent to the house. Neither the *concierger* nor any one else had the slightest idea who the individual was. He came ostensibly to see my friend on some business, and only told him what this business really was. He came

again the next day and the following four or five days, making his visits purposely when my friend and all his family were out, so as to have an excuse, whilst awaiting their return, of talking to the servants, or of wasting a quarter of an hour in the *concierger's* den. He managed to ingratiate himself with this latter individual; and in the course of the next few weeks, during which time he still paid occasional visits, ostensibly to my friend, became quite intimate with the servant. It ended in the *concierger* being arrested one fine day on a charge of having stolen the plate. This was brought about partly by something the detective had seen in the *concierger's* room, but chiefly on account of what he had heard at a place where a number of the agents or brokers for stolen goods used to congregate for business, and to which the detective went in the character of a thief. The crime was thus discovered, and the thief was duly punished.

I mention these two cases, out of not a few with which I am acquainted, as illustrating in some measure the very different systems on which the detectives of England and France do their work. In the latter country, as in every other country in Europe, London is regarded by the dangerous classes as the happy hunting-ground of thieves and rogues of all kinds. I am fully aware that many Englishmen would regard the French detective mode of working as underhand and mean, and object to what they would term any underhand work of the kind. But surely when a question of such magnitude as the detection of crime is mooted, the authorities ought not to be guided by what is merely a matter of sentiment. Murderers, burglars, thieves, swindlers, and all other evil-doers, do not hesitate to use the most effectual means at their command in order to insure success to themselves. Why, then, should we do so? Crime of every kind is getting daily more and more clever and scientific in its working; why should we not avail ourselves of every possible advantage which the perpetrators of crime can command? One thing is very certain, that unless we take a new departure in the manner we attempt to detect crime, the dangerous classes will very soon have everything their own way. As a French police agent once told me, every crime that is undiscovered serves as an incentive for a dozen more of the same kind.

With respect to the very strong dislike which some persons have to anything in the shape of a secret police—or rather to disguised agents of the police acting as spies in the camp of the dangerous classes—it ought not to be forgotten that the same prejudice existed half a century ago against the 'new police,' or the 'Peelers' as they were called, being substituted for the watchmen or 'Charlies' of our grandfathers' days. If the authorities are wise enough to constitute and maintain a really efficient system of secret police agents in the place of what we now call 'plain-clothes officers,' the result will be much the same as was the substitution of a regular metropolitan

police in place of the old watchmen. But if this greatly called-for change is delayed much longer, we shall see the criminal classes gaining in strength every year, until it will become as difficult to get the mastery over them as is the case in some of the Western States in America. A secret police, or rather, a number of secret agents of the police, organised on the French system, is what we must institute ere long, and the sooner it is taken in hand the better. Those who require their services do not hesitate to employ 'Private Inquiry Offices' and other similar establishments; why should the government decline to entertain the idea of such an agency as is here advocated? If any man of influence and authority in the land could be present at a 'business' meeting of English, French, and a few German thieves in some of the lowest haunts of 'Foreign London,' an efficient system of secret detective police would very soon become established in what has been foolishly called 'the safest city in the world.'

In England, we have a curious but very erroneous idea that if a policeman wears a suit of plain clothes instead of his regular uniform, he is fully able to find out all about any crime that has ever been committed. A greater mistake was never made. Not only to the 'dangerous classes,' but to almost every Londoner who is anything of an observer regarding his fellow-men, 'plain-clothes' officers, as our detectives are called, are actually as well known as if they wore the helmet, blue tunic, and black leather waist-belt of the regular policeman. It is quite otherwise in France. A French detective, as we have remarked before, has nothing whatever to do with serving summonses or warrants. He never arrests a criminal; but he points out to the regular police where criminals are to be found. It is only on very rare occasions that he even appears as witness against a prisoner; and when he does so, he assumes for the future a dress and general appearance quite unlike what he has hitherto borne. A French detective who cannot disguise himself in such a manner that his oldest friend would not be able to recognise him, is not deemed worth his salary. He takes the greatest professional pride in this art. In a word, the French detectives are the spies sent by the army of law and order to find out all about the enemy that is constantly waging war against life and property. In England, we have no similar set of men, and what are the consequences? Why, that unless a murderer, burglar, or other offender is either taken red-handed, or leaves behind him some very plain marks as to who he is or where he is to be found, crime with us is, as a rule, undetected. Sooner or later, notwithstanding our national prejudices against all that is secret and underhand, we must adopt a system for the detection of crime on the plan that is found to work so well in France; and the sooner we do so the better, unless we want to make England in general, and London in particular, more than even it is now the happy hunting-ground of all the scoundrels in Europe. All Frenchmen who have visited our country say that our ordinary police is the very best in the world; that the manner in which they preserve order in the streets is above praise; and they are right. Nor can a word be said against the character, the integrity, or the intentions also of our detectives.

But the system on which they are trained is essentially bad. They are the wrong men in the wrong place—the square pegs in the round holes.

BY MEAD AND STREAM.

CHAPTER XXX.—CURIOUS.

'I AM going to the village, Ada, to see Mr Beecham, but I shall not be long,' said Wrentham to his wife.

She in her pale, delicate prettiness was as unlike the mate of such a man as Wrentham as a gazelle linked to a Bengal tiger would appear. But she was fond of him, believed in him, and was as happy in her married state as most of her neighbours seemed to be. Indeed, she believed herself to be a great deal happier than most of them. So far as the household arrangements were concerned, he was a model husband; he interfered with none of them. He seldom scolded; he accepted his chop or steak with equanimity whether it was over or under done (of course he did not think it necessary to mention the repasts he indulged in at the *Gog and Magog*); and he had even put on a pair of unbrushed boots without saying anything aloud. What woman is there who would not appreciate such a husband?

Mrs Wrentham did appreciate him, and was devoted to him. She had brought him a few hundreds, with which her father, a country tradesman, had dowered her, and of that Wrentham declared he was able to make a fortune. With that intent most of his time was occupied in the City; and she often lamented that poor Martin was so eager to make 'hay whilst the sun shone'—as he called it—that he was working himself to death.

'Never mind, dear,' he would say: 'there is no time like the present for laying by a store; and we shall have leisure to enjoy ourselves when we have made a comfortable little fortune.'

'But if you should kill yourself in the meanwhile, Martin!'

'Nonsense, Ada; I am too tough a chap to be killed so easily.'

Then he would go off gaily to the City (or the betting-ring). She would sigh, and sit down to wait for the happy time when that little fortune should be made.

The man whilst he spoke to her was sincere enough; but in the feverish excitement of his speculations he forgot all about wife and home.

At present he was at ease, for he did not mean to go farther than the *King's Head*. So he made the little woman quite happy by his effusive tenderness, and still more by the information that she might wait up for his return. What pleasanter intimation could a loving wife receive?

The village was in darkness, for gas had not yet found its way into Kingshope. The feeble glint of a candle here and there looked like a dull glowworm striving to keep up a semblance of life. The half-dozen shops with their oil-lamps were a little brighter than the houses; but their innermost corners were dark and mysterious. Even the *King's Head* and *Cherry Tree* wore such veils upon their faces that a stranger would have passed by without suspecting

that these were hostelries within the gates of which was to be found good entertainment for man and beast, and where on market-days and fair-days were held high revels.

In one of the darkest parts of the street there was a little window illuminated by a single 'dip': that 'dip' revealed a jumble of sweetmeats, cheap, gaudy toys, and penny picture-books. The eager eyes of a group of children discovered there a palace of wonder and delight, filled with objects of surpassing interest and ambition. There was a wooden sword which young Hodge regarded as more powerful than his father's spade and pickaxe: there was a gilt gingerbread man with a cocked-hat, which was looked upon with breathless admiration as a correct model of the Prince of Wales in all the splendour of royal attire. There was a brief discussion as to whether the cocked-hat should not have been a gold crown, which was undoubtedly the proper headgear for a prince. This, however, was settled by a mite of a girl, who suggested that the cocked-hat was worn when the Prince went out for a walk, and the crown when he was in the palace.

Next in attractive power was a greenish bottle full of brandy-balls; and the children's teeth watered as they gazed upon it. A Lord Mayor's dinner must be a small thing compared with that window with its jumble of sweets and toys.

'Wouldn't you like to have some of these nice things? How happy we would be if life could be all gilt gingerbread and brandy-balls!'

That was exactly what they had been thinking, and an appalled silence fell upon the little group, as they turned to stare at the wizard who had read their desire through the backs of their heads. But they all knew the kindly face of the gentleman who was looking at them so pleasantly. They did not note the shade of sadness and pity that was in his eyes. The faces of the younger children broadened into smiles of expectation: the elder ones hung their heads a little—shy, doubting, hoping, and vaguely fearing that they had been caught doing something wrong.

Mr Beecham patted one of them on the head—a child of about six years.

'Suppose you had sixpence, Totty, what would you do?'

'Buy all the shop.'

'And what then?'

'Eat um, was the prompt and emphatic answer.

'What! would you not share with your friends?'

Totty looked round at her friends, who were anxious about her next reply.

'Such a lot of 'em,' she said with a kind of sulky greediness.

'Well, sixpence will not buy the whole shop; but I shall give it to your brother, and he must spend it upon something which can be easily divided into equal parts, so that you may all share alike.'

The gift was accepted in silence; but he had only moved a few paces away when there arose a hubbub of young voices angrily disputing as to what should be purchased with their fortune. He turned back and settled the matter for them. Whilst thus occupied, he was visited with the unpleasant reflection that what we want does not cause us so much trouble as what we possess. These children had been happy gazing at what

they had no expectation of attaining. In imagination they could pick and choose each what he or she most fancied. Then he had come like an evil genius amongst them and by his trifling gift had produced discord. Had he purchased all that was in the shop there would still have been dissatisfaction.

'Communism will never thrive,' he muttered as he walked away, after pacifying his little protégés as best he could; 'the selfish individual will always be too strong for it. Master Philip is making a mistake.'

'He is a rum chap,' was the comment of Mr Wrentham, who had been watching the incident from the outside of the small semicircle of light cast from the window of the sweet-shop. 'In his dotage? . . . No. I might have said that, if we had not spent a few evenings together. A man who can pick up Nap and play it as he did, is no fool, however much of a knave he may be. He is not that either. . . . Wonder what can be the reason of Hadleigh's curiosity about him.'

His first movement from the darkness in which he stood suggested that he purposed saluting Mr Beecham at once; but he altered his mind, lit a cigar, and strolled leisurely after him. He had found a new interest in the stranger: it sprang out of his profound respect for Mr Hadleigh, for he was convinced that every word spoken by that gentleman, and certainly every act performed by him, was the result of careful reflection and shrewd foresight. He was not a man to do anything without a distinct view to his own advantage. Wrentham intended to share that advantage. But as he was at present unable to conceive what it might be, and was working entirely in the dark, with the hope merely that he should discover the meaning of it all as he proceeded, he considered it wise to move with caution whilst he maintained the bearing of a most willing servant.

He had been under the impression that he had sounded the depths of Mr Beecham's character pretty correctly; but Mr Hadleigh's inquiries and the incident with the children suggested two such opposite phases, that Wrentham could only conclude one of them must be wrong. Mr Hadleigh had started the suspicion that Beecham had some design in hand, the discovery of which would be useful: the scene with the children brought Wrentham back to his first impression—that he was a simple-minded but clear-sighted gentleman who was willing to lose a few pounds at cards occasionally without grumbling.

Mr Beecham had so few visitors in his village quarters, that he had not yet found it necessary to give the attendants at the *King's Head* the unpalatable but frequently unavoidable instruction to say 'Not at home.' So that, on Wrentham's arrival, his name was at once conveyed to him. The message brought back was that, if Mr Wrentham would be good enough to wait for a few minutes, Mr Beecham would be ready to receive him.

When at length he was shown into the room, Mr Beecham was closing a large envelope, which he placed on his desk in order to shake hands with his visitor. At each side of the desk was a bright lamp with a white shade, reflecting the light full upon the document he had laid down. Wrentham had no difficulty in reading the address.

'Hope I am not disturbing you. Got home early, and took it into my head to come down and have a cigar and a chat. If you're busy, I'll bolt.'

'No necessity. I had only to address an envelope to a friend with some inclosures, and that is done. You are very welcome to-night, although we are not likely to have a chat, as I have invited some young people to a conjuring entertainment.'

'I am afraid you will find me an ungracious guest,' said Wrentham, laughing, 'for I had made up my mind to have a quiet evening with you alone, and I have no fancy for jugglers—their tricks are all so stale.'

'You will find this man particularly amusing. He is clever with his tongue as well as his hands, and is remarkably well-mannered, although you will be astonished, perhaps, to learn that he is only a street performer. I ought not to have told you that until after you had seen him. However, my chief pleasure will be—and I am sure yours will be—in seeing how the children enjoy the magician's wonders. Mr Tuppit tells me that he never has so much delight in his work as when he has an audience of young people. We have got the large dining-room for the performance, and it is likely to turn out a brilliant affair. You must stay.'

At the mention of the conjurer's name, Wrentham made a curious movement, as if he had dropped something—it was only the ash of his cigar which had fallen on his sleeve. He dusted it into the fender.

'I wish I could go into things of this sort like you,' he said, smiling admiringly at Mr Beecham's enthusiasm; 'but I can't. I don't believe you could do it either, if you had heavy and anxious work on hand. But you belong to the lucky ones who have successfully passed the Rubicon of life. You have made your hay, and can amuse yourself without thinking about to-morrow. I am never allowed to get to-morrow out of my head.'

'Most people say that,' was Mr Beecham's response, with one of his quiet smiles; 'and I always think it is because we waste to-day in thinking of to-morrow.'

'Hit again,' exclaimed Wrentham with a frank laugh. 'I believe you are right; but we cannot all be philosophers. Nature has most to do in forming us, whatever share education may have in it. Where the dickens did you pick up your philosophy? In the east, west, north, or south? Have you been a traveller for pleasure or on business? Where have you been? What have you done, that you should be able always to see the sunny side of life? There's a string of questions for you. Don't trouble to answer them, although I should like if possible to learn how you became what you are—so calm, so happy.'

All this was spoken so good-humouredly—as if it were the outcome of nothing more than jesting curiosity—that Wrentham fancied he had very cleverly turned to useful account a passing observation. His host could not avoid giving him some direct information about his career now.

Mr Beecham appeared to be amused—nothing more.

'I have travelled in many directions of the compass, partly on business, partly on pleasure.

Everywhere I have found that although the scenes are different, men are the same. Those who have had a fortune made for them spend it, wisely or unwisely as may be; those who have not, strive or wish to strive to make one for themselves. Some succeed, some fail: but the conditions of happiness are the same in either case—those who are the most easily content are the most happy.'

'Beaten,' thought Wrentham. 'What a clever beggar he is in answering the most direct questions with vague generalities.' What he said was this:

'I suppose that you had a fortune made for you, and so could take things easy?'

'A little was left to me, but I am glad to say not enough to permit me to be idle. I cannot say that I have worked hard, but I worked in the right direction, and the result has been satisfactory—that is, so far as money is concerned.'

'Wish you would give me a leaf out of your book: it might start me in the right direction too.'

'Some day you shall have the whole book to read, Mr Wrentham, and I shall be delighted if you find it of service.'

'But what line were you in? I should like to know.'

'So you shall, so you shall—by-and-by.—You have allowed your cigar to go out. Try one of these Larranagas; and excuse me for a minute—I want to send this away.'

He took up the packet which Wrentham had observed lying on the desk, and quitted the room.

'Wish I could make him out,' was Wrentham's reflection, as, after lighting his cigar, he stood on the hearth with his back to the fire and glared round the room in search of something that might help to satisfy his curiosity. 'Maybe there is nothing to make out. . . . But what does he want sending off letters to Madge Heathcote at this time of evening? I saw the address plainly enough, and that letter was for her. . . . There is something to find out.'

(To be continued.)

THE ASHBURNHAM COLLECTIONS.

IN 1763, Mr Grenville, then First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, had occasion to enlist the services of a gentleman familiar with ancient handwriting, in the arrangement of papers and other business. So well did Mr Thomas Astle do his work, that, two years later, he was made Receiver-general on the Civil List; subsequently becoming, in succession, chief clerk in the Record Office, and keeper of the records in the Tower. Astle was a diligent and discreet collector of manuscripts; and mindful of his obligations to the Grenvilles, directed by his will that his valuable library should pass into the possession of the Marquis of Buckingham for the sum of five hundred pounds. That nobleman gladly accepted the conditional bequest, and housed the sometime keeper's treasures honourably at Stowe. As opportunities offered, he and his successor added books and documents to Astle's store, until they had brought together a mass of original materials for the history of the three kingdoms unrivalled by any other private collection.

The middle of the present century saw Stowe shorn of its glories; and in 1849, its famous manuscripts were advertised for public sale; but their threatened dispersion was fortunately averted by the Earl of Ashburnham purchasing the entire collection, and adding it to his own extensive library, rich in works of early European and English literature. At the time of the earl's death he was the possessor of four distinct collections, known as the Stowe, the Barrois, the Libri, and the Appendix. The last-named, representing his occasional purchases, consisted of two hundred and fifty volumes, including richly illuminated missals and Books of Hours, choice copies of the works of Chaucer, Wicliffe, Gower, Dante; English chronicles, monastic registers, and individual manuscripts of great rarity and value. The Barrois collection of seven hundred and two manuscripts was notable for its specimens of ancient bindings, its illuminated manuscripts, and its examples of early French literature; while the Libri section was remarkable for its very ancient manuscripts, its copies of Dante's *Commedia*, its works of early Italian literature, its rare autographs, and its letters of distinguished French men of science.

In 1879, all these treasures were offered by the present Earl of Ashburnham to the trustees of the British Museum for the sum of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds; but upon their requesting him to separate the manuscripts from the printed books, the earl intimated that, finding he had underpriced his library in the first instance, he should require the hundred and sixty thousand pounds for the manuscripts alone; or fifty thousand for the Stowe collection, and fifty thousand for the Appendix collection, if the trustees elected to buy them only; and with that intimation the negotiation ended. In the autumn of 1882 the Museum authorities sought Lord Ashburnham again, to learn that he would only sell the collection as a whole at the price he had originally named. The keeper of the department of Manuscripts went down to Ashburnham Place, examined the collection volume by volume, and returned with above nine hundred of the choicest volumes and portfolios of papers, for the inspection of the trustees themselves; and they came to the conclusion that, all things considered, the collection was worth the money demanded for it; and recommended the Treasury to purchase it, and give the trustees power to make over certain portions of the Libri and Barrois collections—said to have been abstracted from the public libraries of France—to the French government on payment of twenty-four thousand pounds. To this proposition the Treasury would not agree, not being prepared to purchase the collection *en bloc*.

Then Lord Ashburnham agreed to sell the Museum the Stowe and Appendix divisions for ninety thousand pounds. The Treasury offered seventy thousand pounds; whereupon the earl requested that the manuscripts in the possession of the Museum trustees should be returned to their proper home. Determined, if possible, to avert what they regarded as an irreparable national calamity, the trustees proposed to make good the twenty thousand pounds by allowing a reduction on the annual vote for the Museum to the amount of four thousand pounds for the

next five years. 'My Lords' were obdurate, the earl was firm; and the disappointed Museum trustees had nothing left to them but to retire with an expression of their regret at the untoward result of their efforts to save the precious manuscripts from probable expatriation. A week or two later, however, they were gladdened by receiving a verbal intimation from the guardian of the public purse that the government were ready to purchase the Stowe collection provided it could be obtained for forty thousand pounds. Lord Ashburnham would not lower his demand to that extent, but consented to accept forty-five thousand pounds. So the bargain was struck, the House of Commons voted the money, and the much-talked-of manuscripts became the property of the nation.

Whatever the pecuniary value of the Stowe collection may be, the custodians of our great library may well rejoice upon acquiring its nine hundred and ninety-six volumes of charters and cartularies; ancient missals and rituals; old English chronicles; old statutes; reports of famous trials; household books; royal wardrobe accounts; papal bulls and indulgences; historical, legal, and ecclesiastical documents; diplomatic, political, and private correspondence; and papers of more or less value to the antiquary, genealogist, and general student. In truth, the subject-matter of this mass of manuscripts is of so varied a nature that it would almost be easier to say what is not, than what is to be found therein. We shall not attempt to do either, but content ourselves with enumerating some of the curiosities of the collection.

First among these comes a volume of Anglo-Saxon charters, the cover of which is adorned with figures of saints and martyrs, and a representation of the crucifixion, worked with the needle, in coloured silks and gold-thread. The first charter in the volume is one of six lines, by which Withred, king of Kent, granted certain lands to the nuns of Liming; His Majesty, 'being illiterate,' making the sign of the cross against his name. Another relic of Anglo-Saxon times is the register of Hyde Abbey, Winchester, the greater part of which is supposed to have been written in the reign of Canute. On the first page are portraits of that monarch and his queen 'Ailgyth' in their robes of state. On the fourth leaf are memoranda of the Conqueror's building a palace at Winchester, and of the burning of the city in 1140 by Robert, Earl of Gloucester. A copy of Alfred's will is followed by an account of the burying-places of the Anglo-Saxon kings and saints, various forms of benedictions, a list of relics preserved at Hyde, and a calendar of saints. On one page is a fragment of the *exultat* as chanted on Holy Saturday in the monastery, with the musical notes—consisting of lines and points placed over the syllables, and indicating by their forms the high and low tones in which these syllables were to be sung.

Of historical interest are—the original report of the trial of 'Johanne d'Arc,' dated the 7th of July 1456, and duly signed and attested by the notaries; the original declaration of eight of the bishops in favour of Henry VIII's assumption of power in church matters, in which they pronounce that Christian princes may make ecclesiastical laws; and two little volumes—one about

three inches square, containing sundry calendars and tables, written on leaves of vellum, and bearing on the fly-leaf, in the handwriting of the Duke of Somerset: 'Fere of the lord is the bebeginning of wisdume: put thi trust in the lord w^h all thine heart; be not wise in thyne own conseyte but fere the lord and fle from evele frome the toware the day before deth, 1551. E. SOMERSET.' The other booklet is about an inch square, and bound in gold, enamelled in black, and furnished with two small gold rings, by which it could be suspended to its owner's waist. It consists of a hundred and ninety-six pages of vellum, on which are written the seven penitential psalms. This was one of Henry VIII.'s gifts to Anne Boleyn, and was given by her—Horace Walpole says—to her maid of honour Mrs Wyatt, when the beautiful queen bade farewell to the world on Tower Hill.

Among other originals of political importance may be noted the return concerning the levy of ship-money, made to Sir Peter Temple, High-sheriff of Bucks, from the parish of Great Kimble, bearing the names of those who tendered their refusal to the constables and assessors; the said constables' and assessors' names appearing in the list of protesters, at the head of which stands the name of John Hampden. Of a little later date is the secret article of the treaty made in 1654 between Louis XIV. and the Protector of England for the expulsion from France of Charles II., the Duke of York, and eighteen royalists; Cromwell undertaking in return to expel certain Frenchmen from England. This document is signed by De Bordeaux on the part of the French king; by Fiennes, Lisle, and Strickland on the part of the Commonwealth. The Grand Monarch's own signature appears to an order addressed to the governor of the Bastille—an order for him to permit the Countess de Bussy to sleep with her husband.

There are two literary curiosities in the shape of a five-act tragedy by Bale, Bishop of Ossory, who died in 1563; and a comedy, author unknown, intended to be played for the amusement of Elizabeth and her court; the latter ending with the following lines, addressed to Queen Bess:

May you have all the joys of innocence,
Injoying too all the delights of sense.
May you live long, and knowe till ye are told,
T'endure your beauty, and wonder you are old;
And when heaven's heats shall draw you to the skye,
May you transfigured, not transfigured dye!

In the original draft of a dedication to be prefixed to some operas by Purcell, Dryden says: 'Musick and poetry have ever been acknowledged sisters, which walking hand-in-hand support each other. As poetry is the harmony of words, so musick is that of notes; and as poetry is a rise above prose and oratory, so is musick the exaltation of poetry. Both of them may excel apart; but sure they are most excellent when they are joined, because nothing is then wanting to either of their perfections, for thus they appear like wit and beauty in the same person.' At the end of a copy of Bacon's *Essays*, presented to Mrs Newsham, in 1725, by 'her servant, A. Pope,' is a sonnet in the poet's handwriting, entitled *A Wish to Mrs M. B. on her Birthday, June 16*. It is to be found in his works, expanded into a

twenty-line *Epistle to Miss Martha Blount, on her Birthday*.

'The Emperor of Morocco's curses against his two eldest sons, taken from the original in his own writing in the register of the principal church at Morocco,' is a curiosity, if scarcely a literary one; and the same may be said of a specimen of French penmanship—a series of portraits of the time of Louis XIV., executed with such freedom that they seem to have been done with one uninterrupted flourish of the pen. Each portrait has a song with music appended to it, the volume ending with a piece of music in Rousseau's own hand, composed by him at Paris in 1776.

The letters, original and transcribed, in the collection are so multitudinous, that it is impossible to enter into detail about them; they cover every reign from Edward III. to George III., and unrepresented Englishmen of any note are few indeed; while epistles written by such illustrious foreigners as Doge Andrea Contarini, Francis I., Cardinal Mazarin, Louis XIV., Madame de Maintenon, Voltaire, Frederick the Great, Mirabeau, Lafayette, and Napoleon the Great, figure in the catalogue of contents.

We must mention that among the treasures acquired by the nation are a number of manuscripts in the Irish language, and of manuscripts relating to the history and antiquities of Ireland; besides the correspondence of Arthur Capel, Earl of Essex, Lord-lieutenant of Ireland under Charles II. The government having decided that manuscripts in the Irish language, and those bearing more or less directly upon Irish history and literature, should be lent indefinitely to the Royal Irish Academy, for the use of students and the public, the greater portion of the above will be lost to Bloomsbury—how large a portion will not be known, until the representatives of the British Museum and the Irish Academy have settled the matter between them.

A SKETCH FROM MY STUDY WINDOW.

THERE were three of them, little pale-faced, grave-eyed girl-children, unmistakable Londoners in their lack of the healthy colouring and sturdy limbs which would have marked country-bred children of their age. The eldest was perhaps eleven; the younger ones, eight and six years old respectively; and it was pretty, as well as pathetic, to see the prematurely motherly care which the eldest sister—whom the little ones called 'Gertie'—bestowed upon the tiny mite whose responsible protector she seemed to be.

When first I noticed them, they were walking demurely round the gravel-path of the square upon which my study window looks out. Each had a skipping-rope dangling loosely from her hands; and the younger ones were evidently intent upon some grave story from the lips of their sister. Presently, they came along the upper side of the garden, towards my window, and I had my first glimpse of their faces. Each was pretty in her childish way. The eldest, tall for her age, slight and dark, had regular features and soft brown eyes, whose naturally pathetic expression was heightened by the deep mourning-frock and crape-trimmed hat which each alike was wearing. The two younger children were less noticeable in

appearance, the second being, I fancied, ordinarily a merry, dimpled little maiden, whom, but for some temporary cloud on her spirits, I could more easily have pictured enjoying a good game of romps with some of the other small frequenters of our garden; and the youngest, like Gertrude, a pensive-faced baby, with sadly transparent colouring and fragile figure, betokening constitutional delicacy. It was summer-time; and as they passed beneath my widely opened window, I caught the word 'Mother' two or three times repeated, gravely pronounced by Gertie; and I judged, from the reverent expression of the three little faces and from their deep mourning, that she was recalling to the memory of her charges some childish reminiscences of a recently lost parent.

I had certainly never seen them before, or, child-worshipper that I was, I could not have failed to recognise them. All the other young people in the garden—from Tommy, surname unknown, aged two, with a penchant for sticky sweetmeats, and an aversion to nurses, to Miss Mildred Holford, verging upon sweet seventeen, and alternating between spasmodic propriety and innate tomboyism—were intimately known to me—by sight, at all events; and in my idle speculations upon the little strangers, I jumped to the conclusion—subsequently verified—that they were new-comers to one of the large empty houses facing mine on the further side of our square.

From that day forward I saw them frequently, generally, as on the first occasion, alone, the eldest in charge of the younger ones, sometimes accompanied by a tall lady, also in deep mourning, whom they addressed as 'auntie'; sometimes with a sober, matronly looking nurse, who carried in her arms a bundle of white drapery, enveloping what I opined to be a baby of tender weeks. This baby was the favourite toy of the three little sisters. Nothing else possessed the slightest attraction for them when their tiny brother was present; and it was a pretty study to watch the pride and delight of the two elder girls, when their nurse allowed each in turn to carry the white-robed atom a few steps away from her side and back again. Nor was little Ethel, the youngest of the trio, debarred from the privilege of playing nurse sometimes. Too weak and frail to be safely trusted to carry the precious burden, it was her chief delight to sit, still as a mouse, on the corner of one of the garden-seats, crooning and talking baby-talk to the unconscious morsel on her lap, while the nurse and elder girls kept guard at a few yards' distance, their absence being clearly a highly valued condition of this innocent 'confidence-trick.'

Morning after morning, throughout the first week of their residence in our square, was the same routine carried out; the younger ones sometimes indulging in a run with their hoops, from Gertie's side; sometimes amusing themselves with dolls or skipping-ropes; or again listening while their aunt or Gertrude read aloud to them. But on Saturday morning they did not appear as usual, and I found myself quite missing their company, and puzzling myself with vague speculations to account for their absence. Even in this short time my heart had gone out towards the little motherless girls, and I had begun unconsciously to weave fanciful theories of their past

and present life, to account for the sweet seriousness and precocious womanly airs of the eldest girl, and the influence of love—for her manner was untinted by any assumption of elder-sisterly prerogative—which she clearly possessed and exercised over the younger ones. Rightly or wrongly, I never knew, but I pictured them the children of parents separated by a long interval of years in age, but united by strong bonds of confidence and affection. Gertrude's sedate air suggested that she had been rather the companion than the plaything of her mother; and that the mother's influence had been tender, without caprice, was apparent from her child's gentle gravity, and from the unquestioning attention paid to her lightest hint or remonstrance by the younger sisters. The words, 'Mother would not have wished it,' or, 'Father would not like to see it,' from her lips were sufficient in a moment to quell Edith's occasional fractiousness, or to dry Ethel's ready tears; while the confidence existing between all three was enough to show that no undue favouritism had ever awakened jealousy of one another. Unselfish to a fault, Gertrude was the one to give way in every question of mere personal preference; but she never swerved from her adherence to what she believed would be 'mother's' wish or course of action, and an appeal from her opinion to aunt or nurse was rare indeed.

Such were some of my dreams of these little ones that Saturday morning. Luncheon-time came, and passed, without a sign; and so restless and idle had I been all morning, owing to the absurd interest I had taken in the non-appearance of my little friends, that, contrary to my usual custom, I was obliged to forego my half-holiday and settle to work again. Suddenly, glancing from my book for the thousandth time that day, I spied the little trio approaching. They looked less grave than usual, and were manifestly pre-occupied, as I judged from the frequent glances cast by one and all towards the entrance-gate, at the far corner of the square. At last the cause became evident. The gate swung open, and an elderly gentleman in deep mourning came hastily into the garden. He was quickly perceived; and with a glad cry of 'Father!' all three children scampered off to meet him. 'Father's' half-holiday was clearly the event of the week for his little motherless girls; and for the first time since I had seen her, the sad cloud passed from Gertie's eyes, and for a few hours was lost in the light of unalloyed happiness. Under 'father's' generalship they played merry childish games, laughing and romping as I had never yet deemed it possible they could laugh or romp; and when the delicate little Ethel grew weary and could play no longer, there was a knee for each of the younger pets, and a seat at her father's side for Gertrude, while it was evident that he was spinning yarns and racking his brains for fairy tales, each of which was rewarded with unanimous applause, and reiterated calls upon the narrator's memory or invention. So passed the happy holiday afternoon, a peaceful idyll in the great prose volume of London life; and when at length the father rose from his seat, and, with a tiny hand in each of his, moved slowly homewards, I felt as if the colour had faded out of the summer

evening, and the workaday clouds had begun to close in upon me again.

So the July days glided by, bringing no greater change into the lives of my three little maidens than the regular alternations of grave morning walks and gay Saturday afternoon romps. They seemed shy of making friends among their light-hearted young neighbours; and the other children appeared to be awed and checked in their advances by the sombre crape and sedate looks of the newcomers. Now and then, a timid overture was made, generally to Edith, the second of the trio, whose dimpled cheeks looked more suggestive of successful negotiation than her sisters' demure faces; but such attempts were rare, and as a rule, my own unsuspected interest was the only notice taken of their doings, and they were left unmolested in the pursuit of their quiet routine.

By-and-by my vacation-time arrived, and I left the heat and bustle of London for a country rest. On my return, the days had shortened perceptibly, the sun was shorn of half his brightness, the garden trees were shedding their leaves, and autumn fogs and winter frosts were approaching apace. There, as usual, on the first morning after my return to work, were the little ladies. But there were no longer quiet hours of basking in sunshine on the seats, and much of the sober confabulation seemed to have taken wing with the flight of their summer surroundings. Time was acting its usual part as the disperser of clouds and lightener of hearts. 'Mother' had become less a recent reality than a sweet occasional memory, and the young blood of the younger sisters called for more active exercise than the grave promenade that had sufficed previously.

But as autumn faded into winter, and the London sky donned its accustomed leaden-hued uniform, the fireside usurped the attractions of the window-seat, and but for an occasional glimpse, accidentally caught as I passed the window, I lost sight of my little triad of maidens.

The spring of 187- was unusually late in making its appearance. The sun sullenly refused to pierce the shroud of fog and mist; the buds seemed reluctant to shed their outer coats, and unfold their tender greenery to the dangers of frost and blighting east wind. The grass was still discoloured and sodden in our garden, and the costermonger appeared to have forgotten his customers in our square, so tardy was he in making the welkin ring with his hoarse vindication of his wares, 'All a-blowin' and a-growin'.' Though the almanac stoutly averred that we had entered upon the 'merrie month of May,' a fire was still an absolute essential for comfort, and I hesitated long before wheeling my writing-table to the window and taking up my fine-weather quarters. However, the move was at length made; and the first group that met my eyes, as they wandered from my work to the outer world, was the now familiar one of the 'serious family.' But they were no longer alone; with them walked a middle-aged lady, of precise and dignified aspect, whom it required but slight knowledge of female human nature to identify as a governess. The little ones too were changed. Gertie and Edith had grown apace. The former, prettier and even more demure than of yore, had shot up into a tall slip of a girl, giving promise

of graceful figure and carriage, though as yet showing the angularity and awkwardness of too rapid growth. Edith was more roguish-looking, and a trifle less roundabout than before, and had clearly a fine fund of animal spirits, longing for a chance of making their escape. But Ethel! Alas! more plainly than ever were the sure signs of delicacy noticeable in the sweet wee face and unnaturally deep-set eyes. She had lost rather than gained ground during the long severe winter. The effort to take part even in her sisters' quiet sports was clearly beyond her strength, and it was sad indeed to catch the patient, hopeless expression with which she urged her weariness, as a plea for resisting Edith's thoughtless, childish allurements.

Before long, I noticed that she had given up the attempt to join the play; and Edith herself was forced to recognise her plea, and to find allies in her romps among the other small-fry in the gardens, with many of whom she had now struck up acquaintance. Presently, even the daily walk grew to be too much for the feeble little frame, and a miniature carriage was devised, in which, tended constantly and lovingly by her eldest sister, she spent her outdoor hours. Many a long silent morning did she while away under the trees, the baby on her lap, and the sweet child-voice of her devoted sister reading to her, or telling her stories, with unwearied patience. Many a time have I paused in my work to watch the sad drama of pure unselfish love. Many a Saturday afternoon have I spent at my window, unable to turn away from the simple yet solemn scene, enacted in that commonplace London square, to seek pleasure and distraction among the busy haunts of river-side or park.

Those Saturday half-holidays were no longer joyous festivals for the father and children. His coming was as regular, and as eagerly looked for, as ever; but now there was no glad rush to meet him at the gate, no merry romps, in which he was the youngest child among the group. He saw, all too clearly, and Gertrude too had long since recognised, the inevitable parting that was slowly but surely approaching, and the tender devotion of both parent and sister was touching indeed to witness. Again a little while, and the bright summer sun, falling on the garden and its merry groups of children, kissed the little pale cheek no more. I could see the sudden pause in game and romp, when the two sisters appeared as usual for their morning walk. I could see the players hasten to their side, and could imagine the eager inquiries for the little invalid, the looks and words of childish sympathy offered with heartfelt though transient earnestness, before they turned away to resume their games, claiming Edith as a playmate, and leaving poor Gertie alone with her sad thoughts. Till at length the day came when inquiry was vain. The blinds were drawn close in the house across the square; the accustomed walk in the garden was omitted; for the little sister's pure innocent spirit had passed away into eternal peace; and ere yet the mourning-frocks worn for their mother were laid aside, baby Ethel had gone to join her in the better home, and Gertrude had another sweet memory to treasure up in her young heart, another heavy grief to add intensity to the pathos of her soft brown eyes.

Many months passed without my catching more than a passing glimpse of the young mourners. The garden had too many associations with the past to be any longer the scene of Edith's romps or Gertrude's daily walks; and it was only when I happened by accident to meet the children in the street, or to get a distant peep at them in the gardens of the Temple, now their chosen resort, that I could judge of my favourite's recovery of her spirits, or admire the delicate beauty which grew with her growth. She was fulfilling the promise of her childhood, and ripening into a quiet pensive style of beauty, forming a more marked contrast than ever to the vivacious younger sister, whose chatter and merry laugh rippled through the cloistered precincts of the Temple, and drew many a backward glance from the blue-bag laden lads passing through these quiet courts. Then came a long break in my connection with our square. Duty called me from England for a spell of some years, and on my return to the familiar scenes, I found it impossible to take up the old threads of association, and to recognise, in the grown youths and maidens who played lawn-tennis in the well-known garden, the little ones whom I had seen playing under care of nurses and governesses on those grass plots in my student days. I was forced to form a new circle of acquaintances-by-sight, among another generation of children, and I looked in vain for any among the gay tennis-players to remind me of the sombre-clad sisters, in whose childish joys and sorrows I had learned to feel so deep an interest.

Not long after my return to England, I was present, one summer night, at a large party given by a neighbour of ours in the square. It was a sultry evening, and the gas-lighted drawing-room, stripped of its furniture, and given up to such indefatigable dancers as will not be daunted by a thermometer standing at fabulous figures in the shade, had no attraction for a lazy non-dancer like myself. I therefore strayed, shortly after midnight, into the cooler atmosphere of an anteroom, where card-tables were set out, and a few of the quieter sort were enjoying a rubber within hearing-distance of the music. One of the players rose from his seat as I entered, and moved towards the folding-doors which opened into the drawing-room. There he stood for a moment or two watching the waltz, and then beckoned to some one among the dancers. From my quiet corner I saw a young couple approach in answer to his sign, and a happy, ringing voice entreated for one more dance.

'I have promised it to Gerald, father, and he will be so disappointed if I go before he has had it. Just this one more, and I will come.'

'Very well, dear,' he replied. 'But then we must really be going. Remember, you will have a tiring day to-morrow.'

'It is because of to-morrow that I don't want to disappoint Gerald to-night,' she answered, smiling to her partner. 'He won't care to waltz with me after to-morrow.' Gerald did not look as if he indorsed this statement, which was made with a pretty affectation of despair; and the couple were just turning to the dancing-room again, when the gentleman she had addressed as 'father' asked: 'Where is Gertrude?'

'She was with Mrs Gaythorn a few minutes ago,' replied the girl.—'Oh! here she comes.'

I glanced at the approaching figure, and instantly recognised my favourite of days gone by. She had fully realised all my expectations of her. Tall, graceful, beautifully moulded in face and figure, there was all the old pensiveness and the sweet half-melancholy of expression; and as she met my gaze, standing in her white cloud-like draperies in the shadow of the doorway, I could see at once that she was utterly unconscious of her loveliness, and unspoiled by the admiration it must win. I could not, even at the risk of appearing impertinent, resist the pleasure of studying her beauty and noting the grace of every movement and gesture. Fortunately, the corner in which I had ensconced myself was shaded, and my admiration passed unnoticed and unrebuked. I watched her as she courteously but decidedly declined the invitations of two or three eager candidates for the dance; and when at last the waltz was over, and the pretty girl I had before noticed came back, leaning on her partner's arm, and showing me in her *riante* features a dim resemblance to the merry little Edith of my earlier recollections, I followed the party down-stairs. Then having seen them don their wraps and start two and two, Gertrude with her father, and Edith with the happy Gerald, to walk round to their own side of the square, I took my hat and strolled home, my mind full of the sad memories of the old days when I used to watch the little trio of serious faces from my study window.

The following morning broke with a cloudless sky and brilliant sunshine, even in our gloomy old-fashioned quarter of London. I was taking a half-holiday that day; but feeling disinclined for exertion, I contented myself with a volume of Thackeray and a seat under the plane-trees in the square garden, where the sparrows were twittering with a specious make-believe of being in the country. My book lay neglected at my side, and my thoughts were wandering again to the past, prompted by my *rencontre* of the previous night. Half curiously, I turned from the contemplation of the groups of youngsters playing on the grass, to look up at the windows of the house in which my little friends had lived. A carriage and a cab stood at the door; and even as I looked, the door itself was opened, and a procession of trunks and bonnet-boxes was carried down the steps and deposited on the roof of the cab. Among the luggage was an unquestionably male portmanteau; and it needed not the white rosettes worn by the servants to suggest to me the meaning of these preparations. The despairing glance and mock-mournful suggestion that 'Gerald will not care to waltz with me after to-morrow,' recurred to my mind, confirming my conclusion. Five minutes more and the doorway was filled with a group of host and guests bidding farewell to the happy couple. Edith—the brightness of her eyes slightly dimmed as she clung to her father and sister in a last embrace—forced a glad smile through her tears as she turned to her young husband. Together they passed down the steps and entered the waiting carriage. A parting cheer, a shower of rice and satin shoes, a rattle of wheels upon the stony street, and in a moment the carriage turned the corner of the square and disappeared

from sight. Gertrude, who with her father and one or two of their guests had remained at the foot of the steps, to see the last glimpse of her sister, now turned to re-enter the house. But before they passed out of earshot, I heard one of the elder gentlemen exclaim, in a tone of banter: 'Well, Miss Gertrude, I suppose it won't be long before we see some fine young fellow coming to carry you off; and then, what will your poor father do without his house-keeper?'

Gertrude turned at the words, and met her father's eyes with an expression of true, lasting, unselfish affection, which disposed of any need for answering this question. There was no misconstruing its meaning, no room to doubt its changeless truth. Her father took the hand she had slipped into his own, and pressed it closely, without speaking a word. So they moved slowly up the steps and into the house. The door closed; and the picture of sweet unspoken confidence passed from my eyes, to be engraved indelibly on my memory, the closing scene of the simple drama of everyday life, of which I had so long been an unknown and unsuspected witness.

AN INTERESTING ISLAND.

THERE are few subjects of more general interest to the inhabitants of this country than agriculture, in one form or another. To those who earn their bread by tilling the soil, it is of the first importance; to those who do not, it is of importance as indirectly affecting their material prosperity. But apart from the question of pecuniary interest, there is an inborn love of agricultural pursuits, which is a national characteristic. In some few privileged persons the taste shows itself so strongly as to lead them to indulge in farming for pleasure. Others, whose time and means will not allow of this, it leads to employ much of their leisure time in gardening. Many are obliged to confine its indulgence to tending a few flowers in pots. They are very few indeed who feel no interest whatever in the subject. The trait has shown itself more or less in all the greatest races that have swayed the destiny of the world. The haughty Roman dictator who yesterday was omnipotent, is content to-day to return humbly to his farm, and exercise his authority not over a nation, but over a team of oxen.

A peculiarly interesting example of the splendid results which have been brought about by this national taste is presented by the island of Ascension, which has been transformed from a comparatively barren rock, exposed to the most terrific and damaging winds, producing scarce enough of the coarsest vegetation to afford a meagre sustenance to a few wild goats, into a pleasant and fertile island, amply supporting in comfort and luxury a very considerable population. This change it took some time and considerable trouble to effect; but before indicating how it was brought about, a short history and description of the island itself may not be out of place.

The island owes its name to having been discovered on Ascension Day in the year 1501, by the Portuguese navigator Juan de Nova Gallego. Two years later it was visited by Alfonso d'Albuquerque; and from time to time other navigators landed, among them Captain Cook.

Such was its dreary aspect, however, that no one was induced to settle on it. But 'Jack' has always been famous for his ingenuity, and even here it did not fail him. In the north-west part of the island, which affords the best anchorage for ships, there is a small inlet called Sandy Bay. One of the rocks near the landing-place contains a very curious crevice. This was soon christened 'The Sailors' Post-office;' and it became an established custom to leave letters there, well corked up in a bottle, which were always taken to their respective destinations by the first ship bound thither which happened to call. This seems to have been the sole use made of the island till the year 1815, when it was taken possession of by the English, who erected a fort and placed a garrison on it soon after the banishment of Napoleon to St Helena.

Ascension is situated far out in the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Africa, and eight hundred miles north-west of St Helena. It is of a triangular shape, eight miles long, and six broad at its widest part, with an area of thirty-four square miles. It is one of the peaks of the submarine ridge which separates the northern and southern basins of the Atlantic. Its volcanic origin is clearly shown by the numerous crevices and ravines into which its surface is broken, and which are filled with scoria, pumice-stone, and other igneous products. The highest peak, called the Green Mountain, rises to a height of two thousand eight hundred and seventy feet. From this the land, on the north, sinks gradually towards the shore; but on the south it terminates in bold lofty precipices. Communication with the shore is frequently rendered dangerous by the setting in of heavy seas or rollers, which rise suddenly in the most perfect calm, and break with tremendous force on the beach. The cause of this phenomenon is unknown. Only such plants as required very little water were to be found. Of these, the tomato, castor-oil plant, pepper, and Cape gooseberry were the chief. It was always famed for its turtles, which abound to such an extent that as many as two thousand five hundred have been captured in one year. They are now usually collected into two ponds or crawls, the water of which is occasionally changed. They can be obtained only by purchase, any one taking them on the beach or near the island being liable to a heavy penalty. Fish abound, of which the conger-eel is the most prized. Another indigenous delicacy is the egg of the tropical swallow, or 'wide-awake' as it is called on the island. They are largely used as an article of food, ten thousand dozen being frequently gathered in a week. In addition to the goats referred to above, the only other useful product was the wild guinea-fowl, which were found in considerable numbers.

Napoleon's presence, even as a prisoner, in the island of St Helena determined the English government to place a garrison on Ascension. This was in 1815; and for years that garrison was entirely supported on food and water brought there at great expense by ships. The death of the illustrious prisoner in 1821 did away with the immediate necessity for keeping a garrison there; but the Admiralty were anxious if possible to turn the island into a victualling station for the African squadron. To ascertain the practica-

bility of this plan, they appointed Captain Brandreth, in 1829, to make a thorough survey, and use every effort to discover water. We can imagine him diligently examining every portion of the barren and uninviting rock, long discouraged by want of success. With indefatigable zeal, he and his willing workers sank shaft after shaft in the hope of discovering a spring, however far down. His strong belief that one did exist was at length justified. In the Green Mountain, at a great level from the sea, he found one at a depth of twenty-five feet which proved to be capable of supplying all the wants of the island. Large tanks were at once made and piping laid to the garrison.

Having now an abundance of water, the most vigorous efforts were put forth to bring some of the land under cultivation. The most promising parts of the Green Mountain were first planted; and sheltered spots in other parts of the island were chosen, and the ground broken up and irrigated. Recourse was even had to excavating in the side of the mountain, in order to gain the desired shelter. The government did all in their power to insure the success of these attempts. They sent out a trained head-gardener from the Kew Gardens, who took the utmost interest in his work. Great progress was made with the planting of young trees, shrubs, furze, grasses, and hardy plants. The Australian wattle was perhaps the most successful. Holes four feet wide and three deep were prepared, in which it was planted in layers. The hardness and rapid growth of these may be seen from the fact, that in twelve months they reached an average of between six and seven feet in height. Among the grasses early tried was one kind known by the name of 'Para,' a case of which was sent out by Sir William Hooker, of the Royal Gardens, Kew, who always took great interest in the cultivation of Ascension. This grass succeeded admirably, increasing in the most astounding manner, and growing down all weeds and inferior grasses. In 1861, Captain Bernard was appointed governor of the island, and by that time the most thankless part of the task of bringing Ascension into cultivation had been accomplished. He displayed, however, the full zeal of his predecessors; and with the able assistance of Mr Bell, the head-gardener, accomplished wonders in the next few years. A scarcity of manure was one great drawback. This was supplied by using the guano which was found in large quantities on Boatswain Bird Island, a small rock that lies off the west coast of Ascension. This is now largely supplemented by the manure supplied by the cattle, the island being able to support a large number without any imported food. The rapidity with which sheep fatten on the grass is very satisfactory, nearly doubling their weight in three months after importation.

The island is by no means free from vermin. The horses and cattle suffer greatly from a fly, in appearance like the house-fly, but which bites venomously, and causes intense irritation. The 'black grub,' as it is called there, effects great devastation at times among the plants, and as yet no practical remedy has been found for its ravages. The next destructive enemy is the field-rat, which attacks the root-crops, and feeds principally on the sweet-potato. Land-crabs, too,

exist in very large numbers, and add to the destruction. Another animal, the wild-cat, proves itself an enemy, as it lives on the rabbits, and is useless as a vermin destroyer. A determined war is being waged against all these tormentors, a regular system of trapping having been set on foot. In one year, fifty-three cats, seven thousand four hundred rats, and eighty-five thousand one hundred and fifty land-crabs, were destroyed. The thorough cultivation of the ground is also being furthered by the introduction of rooks, minnas, and other birds that help the farmer. With all these drawbacks, the island has been brought step by step from its original barrenness to such a pleasing condition, that we now have over thirty-one acres under actual cultivation, producing among other things, sweet and English potatoes, cabbage, carrots, pumpkins, and turnips; pine-apples, bananas, endive, French beans, leeks, herbs, seedling date-palm, and coffee; sugar-cane, guavas, oranges, shaddocks, fig bushes, mulberries, and cuttings of shrubs. There is good pasturage one thousand acres in extent for cattle, and five thousand acres for sheep, supporting easily over forty head of cattle and between seven and eight hundred sheep. Parts of the island are now well wooded, and about forty acres are laid out in fruit-trees and shrubbery. Few brighter monuments could be pointed out of the success sure to attend the enterprise and unyielding zeal of a nation when well and wisely directed.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

MR PETRIE'S excavations in Upper Egypt, to which we briefly alluded last month, have already made considerable progress, and no fewer than one hundred and forty labourers are busily at work upon them. To some extent, the discoveries made possess that peculiar interest which attaches to the excavations at Pompeii, for they bear witness to the home-life of a people that lived many centuries ago. Thus, the walls of the now exhumed temple have had built upon them at a remote period various private dwellings. In one of these, apparently lived an artist, who possibly was engaged upon the decoration of the temple itself; his sketch-book and eraser—represented by a slab of fine limestone and a piece of black emery—have been found. The limestone is ruled in squares, just in the same way that a modern artist will rule his paper preparatory to making a drawing 'to scale.' Other houses seem to have been used as workshops for a Company of jewellers, for chips of carnelian, lapis-lazuli, and other valued stones have been found there, together with waste metal from copper working. A box filled with rolls of burned papyrus, upon which, however, the writing is still legible, is considered one of the most important finds. Mr Petrie is careful to examine every block of stone and every brick in search of inscriptions. Every inscription so found is carefully copied, and every other object of interest is photographed. The work is evidently being carried on with both energy and skill.

Another important archaeological discovery has been made also in Upper Egypt by Professor Maspero, who has found between Assiout and

Thebes the hitherto unsuspected site of a vast necropolis. Five catacombs have been already opened, and have yielded one hundred and twenty mummies; and Professor Maspero in a cursory manner has fixed the positions of more than one hundred of such sepulchres. We may therefore conclude that some thousands of embalmed bodies lie in this old cemetery, many of them probably of historical interest. In addition to the mummies, there will also be many treasures, in the shape of papyri, &c., which experience has taught us to look for. It seems to be something more than a fortunate accident that so many ancient peoples were moved to bury with their dead, relics connected with the arts or pursuits of the deceased.

A Canadian correspondent of *Nature* gives a curious and interesting account of a phenomenon often to be seen on Lake Ontario during the prevalence of cold and stormy weather, such as the past season has afforded. 'Ice volcanoes,' as they are aptly named, are formed by an uneven strip of ice accumulating along the shore, on which appear mounds twenty or thirty feet in height. Many of these mounds are conical in form, and often have a crater-like opening, communicating with the water beneath. In stormy weather, every wave dashes spray and fragments of ice through this opening, which congeal upon the sides of the cone and add to its height; just in the same way that the fragments of pumice and other material ejected from a fiery volcano gradually build it up into a mountain. But the ice volcano soon becomes extinct, for the crater is gradually clogged up with ice, and the irruption can no longer find a vent.

M. Trouvelet, who for the last nine years has been engaged in studying and mapping the configuration of the planet Mars, which, although not our nearest neighbour in the solar system, is that most conveniently situated for telescopic observation, has just presented a Report of his labours to the French Academy of Sciences. Sir W. Herschel long ago discovered that the polar patches of white on Mars increased and decreased in size in the winter and summer seasons of the planet, in the same manner as is experienced in the like regions of our own earth. Other observers have also mapped out the distant orb into regions of supposed land and sea, sometimes obscured by belts of cloud; moreover, the spectroscope has revealed to us, in its own wonderful way, the undoubted presence of water upon the planet. What are believed to be the continents of Mars are covered with faint grayish spots; and as these spots change their form and volume with the changes of the Martial seasons, M. Trouvelet supposes them to represent masses of vegetation which grow and die under the same solar influences which affect our own globe. Every contribution towards our knowledge of distant worlds—many of them proved to be so much greater than our own globe—must always have a fascinating interest for us.

The ingenious individual who lately accounted for the possession of a suspicious amount of dynamite by the statement that he used it as a remedy for chapped hands, may be congratulated upon pointing out a legitimate use for that commodity, although we trust that the majority of sufferers from injured cuticle will be content with glycerine in an uncombined form. Hitherto,

almost the only legally recognised use for the explosive has been for mining operations, and without doubt it has in this connection been of immense service. Attempts to use dynamite for firearms or artillery have hitherto failed because the explosive action is so rapid that the strongest barrel is shattered. Indeed, dynamite was employed by our naval brigade at the late bombardment of Alexandria for destroying the guns of a deserted fort. For such purposes, and for torpedo warfare, dynamite is invaluable; but hitherto it has been found impossible to use it in gunnery. An entirely new form of weapon has, however, recently been tried with success in the United States, in which dynamite, although not representing the propelling force, plays an important part. The new form of gun consists of a tube forty feet in length, made rigid by being fixed to a steel girder. By means of compressed air, a dart-like projectile charged with dynamite is propelled with great force from the tube. The weapon already tried has only a two-inch bore; but with an air-pressure of four hundred and twenty pounds on the square inch, a range of a mile and a quarter is attained. With the four and six inch weapons now in course of construction, it is believed that, with increased pressure, a range of three miles will be possible. The guns can be cheaply made, and are free from smoke or noise; while their destructive power must be far greater than those heavy guns whose shells can only be charged with gunpowder.

In our own navy, a new form of machine-gun will be probably supplied to the various ships, more especially for boat-service. For some time the Nordenfält gun has been a service-fitting; but it is now proposed to introduce a Nordenfält of larger calibre, which will fire explosive shells instead of solid bullets. From recent experiments at Portsmouth, the new weapon seems to be wonderfully efficient. For instance, a gun firing a shell weighing only two pounds was able to send its projectile through a solid steel plate two inches thick at a range of three hundred yards. It was shown, too, that a far larger Nordenfält, a six-pounder, could be fired from a boat without straining it. These destructive weapons can be fired so rapidly as to deliver from eighteen to twenty-five shots per minute.

The *Telegraphist* newspaper publishes an account of what must be regarded as a truly marvellous triumph of electrical communication, before which Puck's proposal to 'put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes' seems to be quite a second-rate achievement. A correspondent of the paper in question visited the office of the Indo-European Telegraph Company by invitation, in order to note how good signalling could be maintained over thousands of miles of wire. First, a few words of conversation were exchanged with the telegraphist of a German town. The wire was next connected with Odessa, and next with the Persian capital (Teheran). In a few more minutes the experimenters in London were talking with the clerk in charge at Kurrachee; next they had a chat with a gentleman at Agra; and as a final triumph of science, the line was made direct between London and Calcutta, a distance of seven thousand miles. It is said that the signals were excellent, and the speed attained about thirteen words per minute.

In a recent lecture upon gas-lighting, Mr Thomas Fletcher pointed out that blackened ceilings and darkened picture-frames are not due to smoke from the gas-burners, but are caused by floating particles of dust being caught in the flame and thrown against the ceiling. It is easily proved, by holding a glass tumbler for a few seconds over a flame, that water is one of the products of combustion of gas. This water condenses upon a cold ceiling when the gas in a room is first lighted, so that the burnt particles of dust readily adhere to the flat surface. The servant who lights the gas on a dark morning before she proceeds to sweep and dust the room does practically all the smoking of the ceiling that takes place.

That unfortunate commercial experiment, but marvellous triumph of engineering skill, the *Great Eastern* steamship, will shortly proceed to Gibraltar to take up her position in the harbour as a coal-hulk. The gigantic paddles with their engines will be removed, leaving the screw propeller only to carry the ship to her last berth. The Admiralty authorities look with much favour upon the scheme, for the immense ship will supersede a number of small coal-hulks which now encumber the harbour, and are a source of much inconvenience to other vessels. We are glad that a use has been found for the unwieldy vessel, whose only serviceable work has been as the layer of the first Atlantic cables. She was far too big to be profitably worked, and has for many years been lying idle. Her new vocation, although of a lowly kind, is at anyrate better than pauperism.

A new motor, called a 'Triple Thermic Motor,' has, it is said, been in use in New York for the past seven months driving a sixty horse-power engine. Heat is generated by a fifteen horse-power boiler, and the steam thus raised is carried to a receptacle containing carbon disulphide, which passes into vapour at one hundred and eighteen degrees Fahrenheit. An engineer, in reporting upon this new contrivance, says that the fifteen horse-power boiler with very little fire under it generates steam, which operates the motor, which in turn runs the sixty horse-power engine. These seem to be all the particulars published; and it would be interesting to have details of the motor, if it be really as successful as reported. There are one or two difficulties to surmount in the employment of carbon disulphide. It has a most disagreeable and penetrating odour; its vapour is highly inflammable; and lastly, it is by no means cheap.

Some interesting particulars of the American lead-pencil trade have recently been published. With the improved machinery now in use, it is possible for ten men to turn out four thousand pencils a day. The cedar comes from Florida in slabs cut to pencil-length. Four parallel grooves are sawn in each little slab, each groove being destined to hold the lead, or rather graphite. The so-called leads are kept in hot glue, and after being inserted in the grooves, are covered over with a thin slab of cedar, also glued; then the whole is passed through a moulding-machine, and comes out at the other side in the form of four finished pencils. The graphite is mixed with a variable amount of white clay—the greater the proportion of clay the harder the pencil—and is ground with moisture into a paste. The paste

is pressed into dies, and is baked at a high temperature.

The recent outbreak of smallpox in London reminds us that we have not yet succeeded in stamping out this loathsome disease, although the practice of vaccination has checked it to a wonderful extent. Anti-vaccination agitators are very fond of pointing to the circumstance that many persons who have been apparently successfully vaccinated in childhood are in after-years attacked with smallpox. This is perfectly true; and statistics are available which show that in the years between 1871 and 1881 nearly eighteen thousand such cases were treated in the London hospitals. But the popular agitator abstains from pointing out that in ninety per cent. of these cases the sufferers were above ten years of age. These figures prove, in fact, what has been long ago acknowledged, that vaccination does not afford permanent protection. When a child reaches adult age, revaccination should take place. In our smallpox hospitals, the nurses and attendants enjoy complete immunity from infection by taking care to adopt this precaution; and all persons, for the general good of the community at large, would do well to submit to the trifling inconvenience which the operation entails.

The Isthmus of Corinth Canal, a scheme which was promoted originally so far back as the time of the emperor Nero, is now almost an accomplished fact. The dredging operations at the approaches to the canal proceed very rapidly, for about five thousand cubic metres of soil and sand are removed every twenty-four hours. There are large numbers of workmen employed also on the central portions of the channel, and they have the help of railway and plant for the conveyance of material. A new town, called Isthmia, has sprung into being, and it contains some two hundred houses and stores.

'The Rivers Congo and Niger viewed as Entrances for the Introduction of Civilisation into Mid-Africa,' was the title of a paper lately read before the Society of Arts by Mr R. Capper, Lloyd's agent for the district of the Congo. The lecturer stated that within the past five years, the western African trade has quadrupled in value. Twelve years ago there were but four English houses, one French, and one Dutch, trading up the Congo. There are now upon the river's banks forty-nine European factories, and the imports and exports are valued at two millions sterling. Mr Capper pointed out that the great value of these rivers lies in the possibility of connecting them with future railways. Such railways could be easily laid, for the interior of Africa is one vast tableland. A railway across the Desert of Sahara would turn a perilous journey of four months into one of twenty-four hours. By such means the interior slave-trade would be annihilated.

Boring in the earth for water is an operation often attended by great uncertainty. Some few years ago in the heart of London a firm of brewers bored to a depth of several hundred yards without tapping the precious fluid, and the expensive well had to be abandoned. Quite recently, at Burton-on-Trent a similar failure occurred upon a far smaller scale. When the operators had pierced to a depth of one hundred and seventy-six feet without finding water, they called in the advice

of some experienced artesian-well engineers, who recommended the abandonment of the works, and the commencement of a fresh bore upon a site which they selected two hundred yards away. At a depth of only one hundred and fourteen feet, a copious supply of water was found, yielding, in fact, between five and six thousand gallons per hour. It is remarkable that the sites of both bores were at the same level.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE IN ENGLAND.

DURING the past few years, there have been recorded, unhappily, an unusual number of earthquakes in various parts of the world; and many thousands of lives have been lost by those terrible convulsions of nature. Inhabitants of Britain, although constant in their complaints of fog, inclement seasons, and other meteorological inconveniences, have hitherto congratulated themselves upon living in a country which is exempt from volcanic phenomena, and in which earthquakes seemed to be things of a past era. These comfortable reflections were suddenly dispelled on the morning of the 22d of April, when over a large tract of country in Southern England a shock of great severity occurred. In the town of Colchester, and many villages eastward of it, the destruction of houses was very great. Many were entirely unroofed; and in some villages, as the writer can testify from personal observation, it was the exception to note a dwelling in which the chimney-stacks had not been demolished. Providentially, no lives were lost, although several narrow escapes have been recorded. The damage is estimated to amount to several thousand pounds, and unfortunately the sufferers are as a rule very poor cottagers, who are unable to bear the expense of the necessary repairs. For their relief, a subscription has been set on foot under the auspices of the Lord Mayor, and there is little doubt that sufficient money will be readily forthcoming for their needs.

The occurrence of such a rare phenomenon in the British Isles—not quite so rare, by the way, as some people imagine, for nearly three hundred shocks have been actually recorded—has caused an immense amount of earthquake lore to be unearthed and published in the various newspapers. From *Iron* we have an interesting account of the way in which luminous paint is utilised in connection with earthquake alarms in countries where such visitations are prevalent. We are informed that large consignments of the paint are sent to such places, and that the material is employed in the following manner. Small metallic plates covered with the paint are fixed on the doorposts of the different rooms, so that at the first alarm—and happily there is often a premonitory warning of something more serious to follow—the inmates of the houses can readily find their way outside. In Manila, the paint is laid in patches about the staircases, door-handles, and various points of egress. A light which gives off neither fire nor heat is of the greatest value in such situations, where any other form of light would be apt to add its quota of disaster to the dangers to life, already too prominent.

IMPROVED ELECTRIC LIGHTING FOR SHIPS.

Mr J. D. F. Andrews, Woodside Electric Works, Glasgow, has lighted with electricity, after a new fashion, the North German Lloyd s.s. *Emu*. The system, which includes over three hundred and twenty incandescent lamps and a masthead arc lamp, presents some features of a novel and important character. In the case of the small lights, Swan's lamps and Siemen's machines are employed. The wires are all completely hidden, but they are nevertheless arranged in such a way that they can be easily reached when necessary. For these lamps there is provided a new style of holder, which is at once simple and efficient. Each lamp has its own switch, which is entirely of metal; and it is provided with a lead-wire, which fuses in the event of the current being too strong. In the case of every set of about twenty lamps there is another switch, so that the lights can be turned on and off in groups as well as individually; and another lead-wire, so that the leading wires may be protected from too strong a current. The whole system is such as to preclude the possibility of fire. Duplicate machines are fitted up to guard against any breakdown, and either of them can be started or stopped without interfering with the engine which drives them. The masthead arc lamp, of which Mr Andrews is the inventor, is here brought into requisition for the first time. It has about five thousand candle-power concentrated in a single beam of light, that can be moved in any direction forward of the ship. In construction it is extremely simple, consisting merely of a cylinder and piston, the former being an electrical coil of wire. The illuminating power of the lamp is so great that by means of it an object half a mile away can be clearly distinguished by the naked eye on a dark night.

DUTCH RUSH.

'Many years ago,' says Mr W. Mathien Williams, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 'when the electrotype process was a novelty, I devoted a considerable amount of time and attention to the reproduction of medallions and other plaster-casts in copper by electro deposition. This brought me in contact with many of those worthy and industrious immigrants from Bagni di Lucca (between Lucca and Pisa), who form a large section of the Italian colony of Leather Lane and its surroundings. These Lucchesi are the image-makers and image-sellers, and general workers in plaster of Paris. Among other useful lessons I learned from them was the use of the so-called Dutch rushes, which are the dried stems of one of the most abundant species of the equisetum (*Equisetum hyemale*) or "horse-tail," which grows on wet ground in this country and Holland. It is well known to practical agriculturists as a tell-tale, indicating want of drainage.

'Plaster-casts are made by pouring plaster of Paris, mixed to a creamy consistence with water, into a mould made of many pieces, which pieces are again held together in an outer or "case-mould" of two or three pieces. When the mould is removed piece by piece, fine ridges stand up on the cast where the plaster has flowed between these pieces. These ridges are removed by rubbing them obliquely with the surface of the stem

of the dried equisetum. It cuts away the plaster as rapidly as a file, but without leaving any visible file-marks. The surface left is much smoother than from fine emery or glass-paper, and the rush does not clog nearly so fast as the paper.

'In order to find the explanation of this, I carefully burned some small pieces of the equisetum stem, mounted the unbroken ash on microscope slides with Canada balsam, and examined its structure. This displayed a flinty cuticle, a scale-armour made up of plates of silica, each plate interlocking with its neighbours by means of beautifully regular angular teeth, forming myriads of microscopic saw-blades, which become loosened from each other and crumpled up in drying, and thus present their teeth obliquely to the surface. These teeth supply the image-maker with a file of exquisite fineness, and harder than the best Sheffield steel. Their comparative freedom from clogging I think must be due to their loose aggregation while held by the dried and shrivelled woody tissue of the sub-cuticle.

'This natural file is used for other purposes, such as the polishing of ivory, hard woods, and metal, but is only understood in certain obscure industrial corners. I here commend it to the attention of my readers, because I have just discovered a new use for it. Like many others, I have been occasionally troubled by minute irregularities of the teeth, lacerating the tongue, and producing small ulcerations, which, I am told, are dangerous to those who have passed middle age, being provocative of cancer. A friendly dentist has ground down the offending projections with his emery-wheel, and thus supplied relief. But in course of time other sharp angles have stood forth, but so trivial that I felt ashamed of visiting the torture-chamber for their removal. I tried emery paper; but it was ineffectual and unpleasant, as the emery rubbed off. Then I tried the Dutch rush, rubbing its surface cross-wise and obliquely against the offending angles. The success was complete, both grinding down and smoothing being effected by one and the same operation.'

LIGHTNING-STROKES IN FRANCE.

M. Cochery, the French Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, has presented to the French Academy of Sciences a Report on the lightning-strokes in France during the last half of 1883. During the month of July there were no fewer than one hundred and forty-three strokes in France, thirty of these occurring on the 10th, and thirty-two on the 3d. Seven men, four women, a young girl, and a child were killed by these strokes, and over forty persons were injured, including ten men who were affected by the same flash, which struck a plane-tree in their neighbourhood. Nine horses were also injured by the flash in question, which happened at Castres, in the department of Tarn, at 9.15 A.M. on July 4. The same storm also killed a woman at Castres, three-quarters of an hour earlier. The total number of animals killed during July was fifty-seven, including a calf, two horses, three sheep, one goat, one dog, and one chicken; while fourteen cows, eleven horses, one dog, and a goose were injured. In general, the strokes were attracted by poplar-trees, or masts, chimneys, and steeples, as well as elm, oak, and fir trees. The

stems and points of lightning-rods have also been struck, the latter being fused, and the former heated red-hot. The wire used to support vines has also drawn the stroke. In the majority of cases, rain, often abundant, attended the discharge. In August there were only nine strokes, as compared with one hundred and forty-three in July; six persons were killed, and two bulls were injured. In September there were fourteen strokes, killing four persons and six animals, and injuring ten persons in all. In October there was only one stroke, on the 16th (4 P.M.), at Castellane, in the Basses-Alpes. In November and December there are no strokes recorded.

'ONLY COUSINS, DON'T YOU SEE?'

CHARMING cousin, tell me where
Shall I find one half so fair?
Let me, as I taste thy lip,
Swear how sweet is cousinship.
Like a sister? Yes, no doubt;
Still, not sister out and out.
Who that ever had a sister,
Felt his heart beat when he kissed her?
Who by looking ever knew
That his sister's eyes were blue?
Who in name of all the loves
Bets his sister pairs of gloves?

Charming cousin, still are you
Sister in a measure too.
We can act as pleasures us,
No one thinks it dangerous;
Talk of love or of the weather,
Row or ride or read together,
Wander where we will alone,
Careless of a chaperon.
You may dance with none but me—
'Only cousins, don't you see?'
Cousins safely may forget
All the laws of etiquette.

Charming cousin, in your eyes
I can read a faint surprise;
Most bewitchingly they glisten
To my nonsense as they listen;
'What can Harry mean to say?'
You may come to know some day.
Just one word, sweet cousin mine,
Ere we go to dress and dine:
If I ever chance to woo,
Cousin, she must be like you,
And the one who comes the nearest
To yourself will be the dearest;
Type of what my love must be,
Cousin, what if you are she?

J. WILLIAMS.

The Conductor of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL begs to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice:

1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. MANUSCRIPTS should bear the author's full Christian name, Surname, and Address, legibly written; and should be written on white (not blue) paper, and on one side of the leaf only.

4th. Offerings of Verse should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.

If the above rules are complied with, the Editor will do his best to insure the safe return of ineligible papers.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.